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## WHISTLER'S PORTRAIT OF ROBERT BARR

The Witenagemote Club has purchased and presented a portrait sketch of Robert Barr by Whistler. While being somewhat fragmentary as a work of the artist, its local significance makes it of much interest to Detroiters. The Witenagemote Club could scarcely have chosen a better memorial of their former member and associate. Such a portrait sketch implies an intimacy between the sitter and the artist, and it is not unlikely that Robert Barr as co-editor with Jerome K. Jerome of *The Idler*, and as a writer of note in London, enjoyed the friendship of the author of "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies." Whistler also painted a portrait of Robert Barr's daughter.

Robert Barr joined the editorial

staff of the *Detroit Free Press* in 1876, coming here from Canada. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and had received his education at Toronto. In 1881 he went to London and there established the weekly edition of the *Free Press*. The magazine, *The Idler*, in which he was associated with Jerome, was founded in 1892. He is the author of "In a Steamer Chair," "From Whose Bourne," "In the Midst of Alarms," "The Face and the Mask," "The Countess Teckla," "The Strong Arm," "The Unchanging East," "Over the Border," "The Woman Wins," "A Chicago Princess," "Speculations of John Steele," "The Triumph of Eugene Valmont," "A Rock on the Baltic," "Cadillac" and "The Swordmaker." C. H. B.

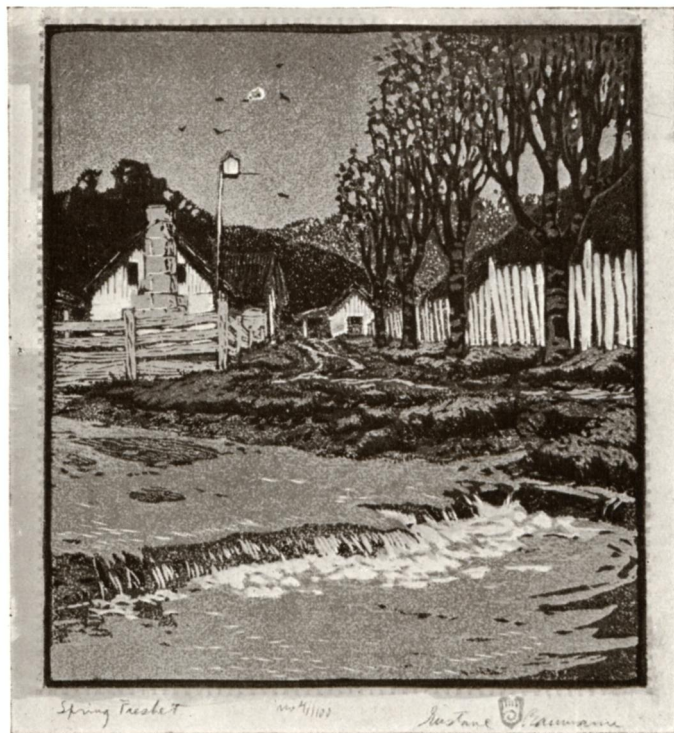
## WOOD BLOCK PRINTING IN COLOR

A group of wood block prints in color by contemporary artists has been acquired and installed in the Print Department. There are three prints, "*Spring Blossoms*," "*Provincetown*" and "*Spring Freshet*," by Gustave Baumann; two by Bror J. O. Nordfelt, "*The Clam Diggers*" and "*At the Piano*"; "*Garden Flowers*" by Edna Boies Hopkins; "*Little Jo*" by Juliette T. Nichols; "*Flowers*" by Elizabeth Shuff Taylor; "*The Violet Jug*" by Blanche Lazzell; "*The Blue Chair*" by Flora Schoenfeld; "*Landing Boats*" by

Maude Squire; and "*Thirsty Little Brother*" by Eliza D. Gardiner. A series of six wood blocks by Gustave Baumann and successive prints from them have also been acquired to illustrate the method of making a wood block print in color.

Wood block prints in color are made, with some variations, after the following manner:

The artist first makes a sketch, or design, which is cut in its entirety on what is known as a key block. Cherry or basswood is most generally used, although some of our most



GUSTAVE BAUMANN. 'SPRING FRESHET.'  
WOOD BLOCK PRINT IN COLOR.

successful artists have used other varieties of wood, and linoleum is found to be a splendid substitute. The engraving is not made on the cross sections of the block, but upon a longitudinal section. Prints of the key block are then pasted upon the other blocks in order to assure accurate registering, and the areas of these blocks, intended for a certain color, are left and the rest cut out with knives, gouges or chisels. Water color or ink is then freely applied to the portion which remains and the paper is laid upon the suc-

cessive blocks and printed with a press or rubbed with a circular pad, the registry being accomplished by marks at the corner and side of the block. The prints of Gustave Baumann exemplify this method.

A simpler method is the wood block printing from a single color block in which the artist manipulates his color variations all on one block. This is exemplified in the prints of Edna Boies Hopkins, Elizabeth Shuff Taylor, Blanche Lazzell, Maude Squire, Juliette T. Nichols, Eliza D. Gardiner, and

Bror J. O. Nordfelt. The difference in the two methods may be discerned by a careful study of their prints.

Wood block printing in color, by its resources and its limitations, is a beautiful medium to which the true artist responds with the best that is in him. The peculiar pleasure of seeing the same design take on a different character with each printing must ever be a source of fascination to the artist. No two prints need ever be exactly alike. The variation of color arrangement is inexhaustible.

But the limitations of wood block printing are no less fascinating. The composition must of necessity be simple. There must be a good deal of elimination in drawing. A few tones must be suggestive of all the artist wishes to convey in the way of gradation of color and values. It is as important for him to know what to leave out as what to put in. It develops in him a rare facility of design. By his own manual dexterity in cutting the blocks the artist must learn to adapt his sketch to the possibilities of the block. He is both artist and craftsman and every print taken from his blocks is entirely a product of his own creation.

From the series of wood blocks by

Gustave Baumann, together with the proofs taken from the same, one may discern the "will-to-do" of the artist, from the making of the sketch to the final beautiful outcome. One may see the mastery of design, the infinite patience and manual skill in cutting the respective blocks, and the mathematical exactness in registering the print on the various blocks, with a sympathetic understanding of the artist's joy in his work.

Wood block printing in color is becoming an ever increasing medium of artistic expression with American artists, and happily so. Prints of this character fill a long felt need of a very large number of people of discernment and taste who desire to possess the work of artists, but whose material means do not admit of large expenditures. The painter-graver is making an important contribution in making art democratic, so that it may be shared by a larger number of people. Prints of this character bring one much nearer the creative artist, and they cost scarcely more than the photo mechanical prints of works of art, which have heretofore satisfied the average man's aspiration to possess pictures for his home.

The prints were selected from an exhibition organized last year with the desire of giving a clearer under-



BROR J. NORDFELDT. CLAM DIGGERS.  
WOOD BLOCK PRINT IN COLOR.

standing of a method of artistic expression having its origin in the deservedly popular Japanese print, which is continually growing in public esteem in the hands of American artists. This exhibition after its initial display in Detroit was shown at the Ann Arbor Art Association, the Toledo Museum of Art,

the Cleveland Museum of Art, the John Herron Art Institute of Indianapolis, and the Hackley Gallery of Fine Arts at Muskegon. Other Museums desired it during the current year, but it had to be disbanded owing to the number of sales and withdrawals by the artists.

C. H. B.